head in the clouds (but my gravity's centered) by brawls (brawlite), ToAStranger

Series: i'll be coming for your love (okay?) [7]
Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)
Genre: M/M
Language: English
Characters: Billy Hargrove, Steve Harrington
Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington
Status: Completed
Published: 2018-10-18
Updated: 2018-10-18
Packaged: 2022-04-23 02:49:59
Rating: Mature
Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply
Chapters: 1
Words: 5,311
Publisher: archiveofourown.org
Summary:

But Steve's a big boy, a grown fucking, like, man and shit. It doesn't make sense for him to lose it over nothing.

So, he curls in on himself, under the blankets, squeezing his eyes shut. He's been alone before, he can be alone for five seconds.

He makes it all of three.

head in the clouds (but my gravity's centered)

This is the second time Steve's woken up after a full night's sleep with Billy in bed next to him.

Billy's got a big arm, heavy at Steve's waist. He's awake, staring at him in the dim light, fingers trailing against Steve's side in a way that makes him *shiver* . His eyes are heavy, lidded like he's barely even awake, and Steve wonders how long he's been up.

Steve's *bone tired* . The day before had been rough. He'd been almost manic, running on little to no sleep, and he'd needed *something* . Needed something to mellow him out because he felt like clawing right out of his skin, which was *dangerous* , because he's, like, *done that* before.

He'd felt a little bad, getting into Billy's stash, but he couldn't go out and get his own and he was *out* . And then he'd crawled into Billy's bed because it smelled *warm* and *safe* . And then he'd felt the weed kick in, settle into his bones, and he'd--

Well.

He hadn't expected Billy to let him get away with stealing his shit but Steve hadn't exactly expected Billy to be so *thorough* about it. Hadn't expected Billy to string him out so far.

Now, a little tender and a little tired, but *better* than he was *yesterday* , Steve's not sure what to *do* . Because he *wants* to curl into Billy's chest and sleep a little longer, but he *also* wants to go scrub his skin in the shower and *hide* in his *room* blasting some *lofi shit* until he feels like he's back in his own body. Not… floating, like he is now. Coasting on something he's not really familiar with.

"Morning," Billy says, as his fingers count over his ribs.

One, two, three -- and then Billy's kissing him on the corner of his lips -- *four, five, six* -- and smiling at Steve like he's the greatest thing since sliced bread.

“How’d you sleep?” Billy asks.

Steve shifts. “Um. Good?”

Billy shifts a little and pushes some hair out of Steve’s face. “How’re you feeling?”

Steve presses, blindly into that touch, and then blinks and jerks back a bit-- not quite knowing *why* he wants Billy's hands on him *so much* , but knowing, suddenly and acutely, that he *does* . “Fine? I'm-- fine.”

Billy frowns a little and his fingers still next to Steve’s head. Not touching, just hovering a couple inches from Steve’s face after Steve pulled away from him.

“Too much? Not enough?” Billy asks.

“I don't, uh…” Steve blinks again, slow, and he stills on the bed; there's *something* , a tingling at the base of his spine, in his chest, in his limbs, like he's amped up, keyed up, but he feels so *sluggish* . “I don't *know* .”

Billy purses his lips, like he’s thinking, trying to figure Steve out by just *looking* at him.

“Okay, well, if you don’t *like* this, then tell me to stop, alright?” And then Billy’s arms are around him, scooping Steve toward him, holding him tight, firm, body heat almost overwhelming.

Steve shudders. He doesn't fight it, but his body winds up like he *wants to* . Even though he definitely *doesn't* .

He feels Billy's hand smooth down his back, slow and warm, and Steve arches, huffing out a breath and letting his body sink into Billy's hold.

“I feel funky,” Steve tells him, and it's *true* .

He feels… *dirty* and *tired* and wound tight. Like he's on the edge of panic.

Billy rubs his back, touch going a little gentle.

“Yeah,” Billy says. “That's okay, though. We’ll work on making you not feel funky.”

“ *How* ?” Steve asks, demands really, feeling a little petulant, a little childish in his want to not *feel* like this, and to not feel like this *right now.*

“We’ll figure it out,” Billy says, fingers carding through Steve’s hair. “We’ll figure it out together, how about that?” And he sounds so damn *patient* , more so than he usually is upon waking up.

And that sounds-- that sounds *good* . Not having to do it by himself. Having Billy there with him. It sounds *too good* .

Steve grunts and presses his face to Billy's neck. Clutches him close.

“ *Sorry* ,” he whispers.

“Nothing to be sorry for, baby. Remember when I tried to fight a wall?” Billy says, pressing his nose to Steve’s hair, breath warm against Steve’s scalp. “How I didn’t have to apologize then?”

Though he had, later, when they got billed for broken plaster in the hotel room.

Steve grunts in acknowledgment.

“Still,” he says.

“Alright,” Billy says, sitting up, arms still around Steve, hauling him with him. “Step one: we get out of bed and we make it to the couch. I get you some juice, and at some point, I make waffles. We watch some cartoons.”

Steve's nose wrinkles up. “I'm *gross* .”

“Okay, well, then, first we shower,” Billy says.

And then he's out of bed and pulling Steve with him, coaxing, but with little room for argument.

Steve follows. Follows because he doesn't really know what else to *do*

and a shower sounds *nice* and Billy-- Billy *told him* that's what they were doing, so.

So, Steve ends up under the spray with him, crowded close in their tiny shower, head tilted back as Billy washes his hair for him.

And his back. And his neck. And even his junk. Billy washes *all* of him. But his touch is just *there* , not teasing, not wanting, just necessary, with a hint of warmth behind it.

“Close your eyes,” Billy says, and tilts Steve's head back to wash the conditioner out of his hair, still shielding his eyes with his hand, just in case.

Steve-- doesn't know what to *do* with this. Feels useless and small in a way he doesn't usually. Starts to shake, after a while, tremors small and random as he counts each breath.

Before he can even really *notice* , Billy's arms are around him and there's a warm, dry towel over his shoulders.

“Hey, it's okay,” Billy says, voice in Steve's ear, one hand rubbing circles over his back. “I've got you, you're okay.”

Steve presses against him, *needing* the skin. “Sorry.”

The shower is off and Steve's toes curl into the fuzzy bath mat. He doesn't even *remember* Billy coaxing him out of the shower, but he must've.

“Don't be sorry, baby. It's okay.”

And then Billy’s drying Steve's hair and leading him back to his own room, digging through Steve's drawers like he lives there, like he knows where *everything* is. Which is -- true. He even shows Steve his favorite sweatshirt. Soft and cozy and from high school, from varsity basketball.

“Arms up,” Billy says.

Steve does it. Lifts his arms and lets Billy slip his sweatshirt over his head. Sinks into the soft material and the smell of it.

Billy does the same with a pair of sweats: makes Steve step into them like he's guiding him through the motions.

“Okay, baby,” Billy says, as he's sliding on some of Steve's clothes, like he doesn't want to stray too far out of his way to his own room, even though it's *right there* . “Wanna watch some Miyazaki, or some stupid shit like *Nailed It* ?”

“Howl’s Moving Castle,” Steve says, feeling sure of at least *that* . “And Spirited Away.”

“Can do,” Billy says.

He grabs like, *all* of the blankets off Steve's bed and then shepherds Steve into the living room and onto the couch -- after laying down a few blankets first, anyway. He piles the rest around Steve, presses a kiss to his forehead, and disappears into the kitchen with a *be right back* , *promise* .

For a second, just after Billy disappears from sight, Steve is filled with an acute sense of *dread* . It's cold and dark and *overwhelming* , not having Billy in sight, not having him *near* .

But Steve's a big boy, a grown fucking, like, *man* and shit. It doesn't make *sense* for him to lose it over *nothing.*

So, he curls in on himself, under the blankets, squeezing his eyes shut. He's been alone *before* , he can be alone for *five seconds* .

He makes it all of three.

“Billy?” he calls out, voice muffled beneath a ratty, handmade knot blanket Dustin threw together for him years ago after Steve told him *in confidence* that he'd *totally* be Team Iron Man after watching that dumb Civil War movie with him.

“One sec, babe,” Billy says, but then he's *back,* kneeling on the ground next to Steve, hands on Steve's legs, literally a couple seconds later. “I wanna get you some juice.”

And yeah, his hands are empty. Like he dropped everything, literally, to come back to Steve.

Steve nods like he knew that's what Billy was doing. “Not the guava.”

“Not the guava,” Billy confirms. “How about the white cranberry peach?”

“Please,” Steve nods.

Billy’s gone and back in thirty seconds, but this time he *talks* his way through it, just rambling about how he's got this gig coming up at this teeny hole in the wall venue that he's really excited about. And then he's next to Steve on the couch, pushing a glass of juice into his hands, cliff bar balanced on his knee. It's one of the white chocolate ones: Steve's favorite.

Steve sips at the juice, eyeing Billy as he sits there. It's *weird* being this *coddled* . It's weird needing it and it's weird having someone give it to him.

“Thank you,” Steve says.

Billy's not even the coddling type. Steve never would have guessed he *could* . But here he is. Treating Steve so nicely.

“You wanna cuddle?” Billy asks, already pulling up Amazon so they can watch Howl’s.

Steve is nodding before he can stop himself. “Please?”

Billy shifts some, moving the blankets so that he can pull Steve into his lap and still keep him wrapped up. The lights are dim -- Billy must've done that earlier -- and soon the movie’s playing, Billy's hands rubbing up his arms, fingers carding through his hair.

Steve doesn't really pay attention-- not *really* , not to the TV. It's good to have sound-- something he doesn't have to focus on, can tune out as he sinks in against Billy.

After he's finished his juice, he turns to press his face against Billy's throat. Rubs his cheek there, sighing, eyes going heavy as that tension at the base of his spine unwinds.

Billy just holds him through it. Takes his empty glass from him and

starts rubbing out the knots in his back. Hands never leaving Steve alone.

Eventually, he opens the cliff bar and breaks off a piece, holding it to Steve's lips. Steve hesitates and then opens his mouth, lets Billy feed him a chunk and chews slow.

“What are you doing?” he asks softly.

“Sharing my cliff bar,” Billy says, even though he's not eating *any* . “Taking care of you.”

Steve tilts his head, rests it on Billy's shoulder, and sighs. “ *Why* ?”

“Because you gotta eat something,” Billy says. “Should've made you eat something last night, but I didn't.”

“We were busy last night.” Steve says.

“ *Yeah* ,” Billy says. “We were. But I still should've. Even if it meant keeping you up. But I didn't, so.” Billy offers him another bite.

Steve's brows draw together, but he opens his mouth anyway. Lets Billy place it on his tongue and chews for a while.

“You don't have to,” Steve says, because he hates Billy thinking that he *does* have to. “If you've got stuff to do.”

“No place I'd rather be,” Billy says.

“I can take care of myself,” Steve insists.

“I know you can,” Billy says, and it *sounds* like a lie because Steve knows that sometimes he *can't,* but Billy sounds so sure. “But I wanna take care of you, so. I'd like to. If you'll have me.”

Steve grunts, muscling closer to him and curling his fingers into Billy's shirt to keep him close. “ *Only* if you, like, *want* .”

“I want,” Billy says, pressing a kiss to the top of Steve’s head. “I want.”

“Okay,” Steve breathes.

Between one moment and the next, curled up like that with Billy, Steve dozes. Or maybe he just zones out. Everything goes kinda fuzzy, kinda soft at the edges, but he's still aware of the warmth of Billy's body, of the sound of the TV, of the fingers, steady and sure, in his hair.

In the next moment, he only becomes aware of anything else because Billy *moves* and Steve makes a frankly *embarrassing* sound of protest. Something like a whine and a lot like a whimper.

“Hey, its okay,” Billy says. “My leg’s just asleep. Gotta move it.”

And then he’s rearranging himself so that Steve is tucked between his legs, the two of them taking up the whole of the couch.

“Think you can eat some more?” Billy asks.

“Could eat a whole horse,” Steve mumbles.

“Okay, I’m not sure if you’re kidding or not,” Billy says, pressing another bite of the cliff bar to his lips. “I could order some door dash, or something. If you want.”

Steve takes it and chews slow again, thinking options. “Too early for Chinese?”

“I’m pretty sure you can order Chinese at six am and as long as you pay, they’ll make it.”

“Yeah, but, like, do you *want* Chinese this early?”

“If you’re asking if there’s a time of day where I *can’t* eat a plate full of spring rolls, you’ve never even met me before, baby,” Billy says.

Steve hides his stupid, dopey smile against Billy, and says a soft, muffled: “Chinese. Extra chow mein.”

Billy tugs his phone out of his pocket and makes the order. Doesn’t even bother checking it with Steve -- they order together enough that other than *extra chow mein* , he doesn’t even have to ask. Probably

orders himself *too many* spring rolls, even knowing Steve'll steal some.

"You want me to rewind the movie?" Billy asks. "You kinda fell asleep."

"Nah," Steve turns his face to see the screen. "Seen it enough to know. Thanks, though. For… all of this."

"Any time," Billy says. "Seriously. I want to help. I *like* to help."

The *you* is unspoken.

"Still," Steve shrugs against him. "It's nice. We don't usually-- I'm just not used to this, I mean. From anyone."

"I'm glad I could do it for you," Billy says, his chin finding Steve's shoulder, tucking in. "Wanna make you happy."

"You do," Steve says, probably too quickly for it to be casual. "You *totally* do. Who else would put up with me but you?"

"Shush," Billy says. "I'm not *putting up* with you, baby."

And he sounds *serious* , which he *is* , because Steve knows that Billy hates it when he puts himself down.

Steve's lips press thin, but he nods. "Yeah, but, like… you kinda *are* ."

"I'm not, baby. I'm taking care of you. There's no putting up with," Billy says. Then, he presses his lips to Steve's hairline.

Steve sighs, wants to argue, but knows better. Knows Billy will just tell him things that aren't true and that Steve doesn't want to hear.

He presses his cheek back to Billy's chest, eyes finding the TV.

"Wanna watch Spirited Away?" Billy asks, apparently unwilling to just *stop* taking care of Steve. "We can start it and then wait for the food to get here."

"Yeah, um." Steve pushes up, digging out from his nest of blankets.

“I'm gonna go to the bathroom. Start it while I'm gone?”

“I can wait,” Billy says.

He re-situates himself on the couch after Steve pushes himself away. Like this, Billy looks *soft* . Homey. Touchable, in a way that he doesn't always.

And Steve *wants* to touch him. Wants to curl into him and stay there for *forever* .

And that's *scary* .

Padding away and down the hall, Steve makes his way into the bathroom. Hides there, splashing cold water on his face, and realizes he doesn't know why he came in here *at all* .

Steve’s still staring at himself in the mirror when there’s a knock on the door. He can’t help but startle.

“Baby?” Billy says through the door. “You alright?”

Steve doesn't know how long he's been standing here, water dripping down his face. But he knows the faucet is still running, has started steaming, and making a clanking sound it only usually makes after a while of being on. He's got a tremor back in his hands and he doesn't know *why* and it's driving him *crazy* .

“I'm *fine* ,” he says, but it's not really true, especially not with how tight his voice has gotten.

“Will you open the door for me?” Billy asks.

Steve shakes his head, biting at his cheek, but he knows Billy can't *see* it. His fingers flex against the lip of the sink.

“It's not locked,” he says, instead.

Billy waits a beat, maybe trying to figure out if he *should* come in or not before he pushes the door open. There’s a hand, warm, on Steve’s lower back, then. Sure and steady.

“Come on. Let’s go watch the movie.”

And Steve follows. Drifts out with Billy's hand on his back, feeling like a scolded dog. Like he's done something he *shouldn't* .

He stands there, at the couch, until Billy tells him to *sit* , and only then do his knees unlock.

But Billy *doesn’t* scold him. Just loops Steve into his arms and curls around him, pressing kisses to his cheeks, his ear, his neck.

Steve doesn't know what to *do* with this. Doesn't know how to *handle* it. He whines, soft from the back of his throat, and tilts his face to catch Billy's mouth with his own.

Billy kisses him back, soft and sure. Firm enough that Steve knows he’s there, that he’s *solid* -- but for Billy, it’s gentle. It feels *affectionate* and warm, especially when Billy’s hand settles at the back of Steve’s neck, just holding him, heat seeping in through skin.

Fisting a hand in Billy's shirt, Steve pulls him closer, parts his lips and drags his teeth against the full bow of Billy's lower lip.

Billy makes a soft noise, *quiet* . Like this, gentle and touchable, sugary sweet, Billy's something *new* . A whole other animal than what Steve usually sees.

And Billy doesn't push for more like he usually does, just *kisses* Steve senseless, indulgent.

But *kissing* is something Steve knows how to do. Kissing and pulling Billy on top of him. Settling under the weight of him with a pleased sigh and an inviting arch.

Billy sighs, breathing out until he is loose and relaxed on top of Steve, just kissing lazily. As close as he can possibly be.

Hands sliding around, smoothing down Billy's back, Steve curls his fingers into the hem of his shirt and tugs. Spreads his legs and invites Billy into the vee of them, until they’re fully pressed together.

And Billy *goes* , smoothing himself out over Steve, slotting in and

kissing back until Steve thinks he just *won* , but then Billy's breaking off, pressing a slow and unhurried kiss to his jaw, then to his neck. Billy just lays on top of him, pressing him down, face against Steve's neck -- heavy. Unmoving.

“Baby,” Billy says. “Food’s gonna come soon. And we've got a whole movie to watch.”

Steve frowns, brows drawing together. He goes still under Billy, hands hovering, like he's not quite sure what to do with them now.

They don't do this. Kiss and have it not lead anywhere.

“Okay?” Steve says, throat working. “Um. Did I, like, do something *wrong?”*

“No,” Billy says quickly. “You didn't do anything wrong, baby. I just don't think now’s a great time to be fucking. How about just kissing, huh?”

“When is it not a great time to be fucking?” Steve asks, laugh strained.

“You aren't feeling so hot. You said so yourself, babe. You should be feeling good when we're fucking.”

And, yeah, that makes *sense* . It's not like that's stopped Steve from trying *before* , though.

“I'm *fine* ,” Steve says, like saying it will make it *true.*

“I know, babe. But *I'm* not okay with it right now, alright?”

Billy's fingers are in his hair, combing through it. Soothing.

Steve falters, nodding, and he shifts beneath him. “Um. Okay, yeah. That's-- I mean, of course, that's fine.”

Billy kisses his neck, smooths his hands over Steve's head.

“It wouldn't make make you feel better, baby.”

Steve sucks in a sharp breath. “You don't-- you don't *know* that.”

“Okay,” Billy says, quiet. “But I also don't know that it will. And I don't want to make you feel worse. I don't want to be the *reason* you feel worse. I wanna be the reason you feel *better.* Okay?”

Steve huffs, squirming under him. “Just-- get off, okay? We'll watch a movie. Whatever.”

Billy lets him up and Steve can *tell* he's trying not to frown.

“Okay,” he says, and then he's turning and pushing himself off of the couch because someone's knocking at the door.

A few minutes later, Billy's setting up the chinese on the coffee table.

Steve curls up on the opposite side of the couch, blanket around his shoulders, watching. Hidden in the blankets, he plucks at a frayed hole in the knee of his sweats to keep from digging his nails into something else.

He meets Billy's eyes when he's done, jaw tight to keep from biting on the inside of his cheek. His heart is fast in his chest, but not in a normal way-- lurching when Billy sighs, like it did when he was little and his dad would shake his head at him.

And Steve's never felt like this around Billy. *Never* . Billy's never made him feel like a burden or a disappointment and yet.

And yet.

“Thanks,” Steve says.

“C'mere, baby,” Billy says, but he doesn't sound angry.

Just a little soft around the edges.

Then, Billy's kneeling in front of him, hands on Steve's knees. Rubbing softly at the skin there, over the blankets, over his sweats. “You should eat something.”

“I'm fine,” Steve says.

“Okay,” Billy says. “You're gonna eat something for me. *Please* eat something.”

And then Billy's pulling back, looping his hands under Steve's knees, and he's pulling him to the edge of the couch. Steve jerks a little, and then nods, throat working.

“Okay,” Steve breathes, eyes darting to the cartons out on the coffee table. “Um. Pick something? I don't… pick something and I promise I'll eat it.”

First, Billy passes him a packet of duck sauce and a veggie spring roll. Then, he sits down on Steve's feet and against his legs. Between him and the coffee table, half twisted to the side.

Steve purses his lips and flicks the packet of duck sauce back at him, biting into the spring roll without it.

Billy helps himself to another spring roll. When Steve is a few bites into his own, Billy holds out another one for him.

“You're doing good. Eat another.”

Steve takes it without thinking. Follows the command blindly. Settles under the constraints of it and the faint praise. Finishes the first one and starts in on the second.

Feels his shoulders go easy. Feels the tension in his gut ease.

When he's done with that, Billy passes him chopsticks and the box of chow mein.

“Eat some.” Billy turns and watches him. “You're doing so good, baby.”

Steve breaks the chopsticks open, handles them with deft practice, and digs in. Finishes half the carton in the relative quiet before he even realizes just how *hungry* he'd been.

And Billy's right there. Watching him. Rubbing his thigh. Drawing patterns over Steve's leg while he eats. Billy barely eats anything of his own -- just choked down on spring rolls while he keeps watch.

Steve waits until he's on his last bite before nudging at Billy with his toe. “Did you still wanna watch the movie?”

“Course I do,” Billy says. And then he's pulling himself up onto the couch next to Steve with a box of fried rice.

Steve sinks back against the couch as Billy cues up Spirited Away. He hesitates and then shifts, back to the armrest, toes wiggling under Billy's thigh.

“Pass the beef and broccoli?” he asks, smile small. “Please?”

Billy settles in, then passes him the beef and broccoli.

“Gimme a piece of broccoli, baby.”

Billy opens his mouth, leans forward.

Plucking a piece up, he offers it out and places it on Billy's tongue. Steals a piece of beef for himself and chews slow.

The movie has started, but Steve's eyes are on Billy.

Billy chews, swallows, and then watches Steve. After a little while, he leans forward and opens his mouth and asks for another by tapping at Steve's leg. And then another, and another. In between bites of his fried rice, in between occasionally glancing at the TV. Giving Steve something to do, but nothing too demanding. Giving him something to *focus* on.

Steve is so *grateful* for it. For the task, small as it is, of feeding Billy between his own bites. For Billy giving him this, this *softness* , and this *structure* .

“Nancy used to make me braid her hair,” Steve says, blurts really, and wiggles his toes a little. “To keep my hands busy. Over and over, in different styles. Would have me take a picture and show her after. She'd-- she would tell me it was good, that *I* was doing good, and then she'd have me do it again. She knew better than to call me an idiot when I got-- like that. Like *this.* ”

“Well,” Billy says, “you’re never an idiot, so.”

But he’s a little quiet, a little thoughtful. For a moment, Steve misses the hair Billy used to have in high school -- long, usually kept in a bun, but occasionally flowing down around his shoulders. It would’ve been fun to braid. It would’ve been *good* to braid. He wonders if Billy ever thinks about letting it grow back, or if he’s left that part of him behind.

“You could paint my nails,” Billy finally says. “I have some nail polish.”

Steve lurches forward across the space between them. Forgets about the half empty box in his lap in order to catch Billy's mouth, a little greasy and a little spicy, but a little sweet too.

Thing is, Steve and Billy don't really kiss for no reason. Not when they're sober, anyway. They've made out, a few times, while passing a blunt. But usually, kissing is a means to an end.

To have it not be, to have it mean nothing but what it is, is… startling and liberating and Steve knows it might just be *right now* so he feels greedy.

“What color?” Steve asks.

Billy’s cheeks have the *slightest* hint of pink to them when Steve pulls back to look at him.

“I’ve got black and neon pink. Maybe some glitter, too.”

Sometimes, Billy paints them before shows, but he almost always is missing it by the next day.

Steve kisses him again, just cuz he *can* , and pulls back. “Black. Can I-- can I do your toes? Should we finish eating first? Should we finish the movie first--?”

“Black it is. I wanna watch the movie, first.” Billy says.

Then, he’s putting everything back on the table and tugging Steve into his lap, between his legs and arranging the blankets around them. After they’re all settled, he passes Steve back his container of food, but keeps his arms around Steve.

“Eat and watch,” Billy says.

Steve lets out a short breath, going stupid and easy against him. Relaxing back against his chest, eating slow.

His focus falls to the TV and stays there. Watching in a way he hadn't before as Billy's fingers card through his hair.

Eventually, Billy takes the takeout box from him. It’s a surprise to find it mostly empty, even though Steve had been occasionally feeding Billy pieces of broccoli whenever Billy poked him in the arm and stuck out his tongue. Steve *completely* lost track.

Billy places a water bottle in Steve’s hand, still a little wet from the condensation of the fridge.

“The soot sprites are my favorite,” Billy says, chin hooking over Steve’s shoulder.

“No-Face,” Steve says, and shrugs when Billy looks at him. “He's greedy, but at least he's unapologetic about it.”

“Well, I can’t like someone who’s *me* , basically.”

When Billy kisses Steve, Steve can feel the smile against his lips.

“Such a glutton,” Steve says, against his lips, leaning back to let him steal another kiss; hopes Billy likes his new word.

From the pleased hum he gets in response, Billy *does* . He doesn’t let Steve deepen the kiss, though. Just kisses him gently and then pulls back, looking generally happy. Content. His arms are tight around Steve, like he just can’t let go, just wants to keep Steve close.

And Steve-- Steve's *fine* with that. Feels more settled, more focused, now, in Billy's hold. Feels like someone could put three things in front of him, say *choose* , and he could pick the right one.

He doesn't feel that way often.

“Favorite Miyazaki film,” Steve says, like a question, resting his head back against Billy's shoulder.

“Princess Mononoke,” Billy says, without pause. “I used to watch it with Max, sometimes.” Even though Steve *knows* that Billy watched it before Max, before he introduced her to it.

It’s kind of cute that he’s a little unwilling to open up *all* the way, still clinging to some small portion of his ego.

Steve smiles and gets him in the stomach with an elbow. “Now, you're supposed to ask me.”

Make me choose .

Billy hesitates for a minute, like he’s not *sure* if he should be asking Steve to make a decision.

“Okay -- what’s *your* favorite. But I mean,” Billy says, “obviously you can’t take *mine* .”

Billy’s eyes are on the screen, but it feels like *all* of his attention’s focused solely on Steve, regardless.

Steve hums, eyes on Billy's profile, and he considers it. “Used to be Howl’s Moving Castle. But I really like Grave of the Fireflies.”

“Haven’t seen that one,” Billy says. “We could watch that one, next. If we don’t fall asleep.”

“No,” Steve says, even though it's a little hard to get the word out. “It's sad.”

“Alright. Well, if we don’t fall asleep, we can always watch *my* favorite.”

Steve smiles a little, playing with Billy's fingers. “Yeah, okay.”

Billy falls silent, then. But he lets Steve play with his fingers and plays back, tracing his fingertips over the tendons in the top of Steve’s hands, mapping them out with the gentlest of touches.

Steve hooks his index finger over Billy’s pinky, catches it and turns his hand over. Traces the lines of his palm out, threads his fingers through Billy's. Breathes slow.

And it's not that Billy goes to *sleep* -- but he goes easy behind Steve like he normally wouldn't while they're awake. Because they don't really cuddle, and they don't really kiss -- not unless it's leading up to something, something that Billy's already taken off the table for the moment. So it's a little *weird,* and even weirder how much Billy's not fighting it.

He's instead relaxing into it.

Pressed against Steve, breathing deep, like he's trying to soak all of it in.

“Hey, Billy?” Steve says, voice soft, after a long while of just tracing his palm, his fingers, the veins in his wrist.

When Billy answers, a beat delayed, he sounds *tired* . Sleepy. “What's up, baby?”

“Thanks for this,” Steve says, practically whispers it, and pulls Billy tighter around him. “Thanks for always looking after me.”

Billy squeezes him tighter, warm body around Steve's, cozy in their little nest of blankets.

“Always,” Billy says, and he sounds like he means it.

And Steve believes him.

Author's Note:

Songs and shit:

Sweater Weather - the neighborhood
Gentleman - Gallant
Lights Down Low - MAX ft gnash
Threads - Izzard & Blankts
Without the Lights - Elliot Moss
Heartbeats - Jose Gonzalez
Mary Jane’s Last Dance - Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers